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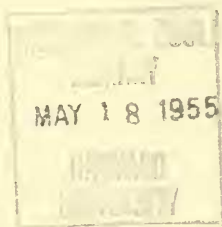
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From Northeastern Mexico

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## A New Cottontail (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) From Northeastern Mexico

By

Rollin H. Baker

Mammals obtained in the mountains of central Coahuila in April, 1954, include four examples of a large cottontail, *Sylvilagus floridanus*, which, not being referable to any recognized subspecies, are named and described as follows:

### *Sylvilagus floridanus nelsoni* new subspecies

*Type*.—Female, adult, skin and skull; No. 57771, Univ. Kansas Mus. Nat. Hist.; 22 mi. S and 5 mi. W Ocampo, 5925 ft., Coahuila; 4 April 1954; obtained by Rollin H. Baker, original No. 2571.

*Range*.—Known only from higher elevations of the Sierra de la Madera in central Coahuila; probably occurs in other montane areas in central Coahuila and also those in northern Coahuila.

*Diagnosis*.—Size large (see measurements); upper parts pale gray, mixed with black, tinged with Pale Ochraceous-Buff (capitalized color terms after Ridgway, Color Standards and Color Nomenclature, Washington, D. C., 1912) on head, back, and flanks; sides (except for flanks) and rump Pearl Gray in over-all appearance when viewed from a distance of two feet; skull large; auditory bullae inflated; rostrum broad; cranium moderately expanded laterally.

*Comparisons*.—From *Sylvilagus floridanus robustus* (Bailey), specimens from the Davis and Chisos mountains, Texas, examined through the courtesy of the Department of Wildlife Management, A & M College of Texas, and the Museum of Zoology, University of Michigan, *nelsoni* differs in: upper parts paler gray in over-all appearance with buffy tinge paler and less conspicuous, especially on back and ears (only specimens taken from March to May compared); rostrum broader and more nearly flat anteriorly; cranium less inflated laterally; external auditory meatus almost round in adult *nelsoni* instead of ovate; auditory bullae less inflated laterally. From *Sylvilagus floridanus chapmani* (Allen), specimens from northeastern Coahuila, *nelsoni* differs in: size much larger

in all parts; upper parts paler gray and not so brown; auditory bullae more inflated. From *Sylvilagus floridanus orizabae* (Merriam), specimens from southeastern Coahuila, western Nuevo León, Distrito Federal, and Morelos, *nelsoni* differs in: size slightly larger; upper parts much less brown (only specimens taken in early spring compared); auditory bullae more inflated. From *Sylvilagus floridanus holzneri* (Mearns), one specimen taken in July from Durango, *nelsoni* differs in: upper parts much less brown; auditory bullae more inflated; cranium less inflated laterally; external auditory meatus almost round in adult *nelsoni* instead of ovate.

*Remarks.*—*Sylvilagus floridanus nelsoni* resembles closely *S. f. robustus* of western Texas, especially in size and color. Other adjacent subspecies, *chapmani*, *orizabae*, and *holzneri*, are much browner although in size and cranial characteristics *nelsoni* does not differ markedly from the two subspecies last mentioned.

There is evidence that a large cottontail exists also in the Sierra del Carmen, Sierra del Pino, Sierra de San Marcos and other higher mountains in northern and central Coahuila. Edward W. Nelson, for whom this subspecies is named, first reported (N. Amer. Fauna, 29:195, August 31, 1909) the occurrence of a large, mountain-dwelling, cottontail in Coahuila but was unsuccessful in capturing specimens. This large, pale animal is secretive and usually confines its activities to mixed grass and chaparral. The specimens taken in the Sierra de la Madera were shot either in early evening or after dark with the aid of an electric head lamp. Animals seen did not venture more than 15 feet from clumps of heavy oak brush.

*Measurements.*—Measurements of the holotype and an adult female (from 21 mi. S and 4 mi. W Ocampo, 5700 ft., Coahuila), respectively, are: total length, 405, 421; length of tail vertebrae, 48, 51; length of hind foot, 98, 97; height of ear from notch in flesh, 76, 72 (in dried skin, 67, 69); basilar length, 56.2, 57.9; zygomatic breadth, 34.1, 35.9; postorbital constriction, 11.1, 11.0; length of nasals, 30.3, 35.1; length of auditory bullae, 12.5, 12.8; greatest breadth of braincase, 26.7, 26.8; greatest width of nasals, 16.1, 16.3; alveolar length of upper molariform tooth-row, 13.4, 13.7.

*Specimens examined.*—Total, 4, from Coahuila as follows: 20 mi. S and 4 mi. W Ocampo, 5300 ft., 2; 21 mi. S and 4 mi. W Ocampo, 5700 ft., 1; 22 mi. S and 5 mi. W Ocampo, 5950 ft., 1.

*Transmitted September 15, 1954.*